

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02487 231451Z
ACTION OES-06

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DEPT PASS TO NAS FOR LARRY MITCHELL

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: TGEN, US, UR
SUBJECT: INTERACADEMY AGREEMENT: WRAP-UP OF VAN ZANT EXCHANGE VISIT
(21.00)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. INTERACADEMY EXCHANGE KENT VAN ZANT LEFT THE
USSR FEBRUARY 21 AT THE CONCLUSION OF 5 PLUS MONTHS OF WORK AT THE
INSTITUTE OF PALEOBIOLOGY OF THE GEORGIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES IN
TBILISI. VAN ZANT WILL RETURN TO HIS FACULTY POSITION AT BELOIT
COLLEGE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. VAN ZANT INFORMED SCIENCE OFFICE THAT
HE WAS GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH HIS PROGRAM IN TBILISI, EVEN THOUGH
HE REALIZED AT THE OUTSET OF HIS VISIT THAT HE WOULD NOT EVEN
BEGIN HIS PROPOSED RESEARCHPROJECT (ON THE ICE AGE IN THE
CUACASUS) BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF EQUIPMENT AND THE GENERAL
INCAPABILITY OF HIS HOSTS TO ASSIST HIM. NEVERTHELESS, HE DEVELOPED
AN ALTERNATE PROJECT WHICH HE TERMED PROFESSIONALLY USEFUL AND FOR
WHICH HE RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FROM HIS
COLLEAGUES IN THE INSTITUTE. VAN ZANT EXPRESSED NO DISSATISFACTION
WITH HIS TREATMENT BY THE GEORGIAN ACADEMY AND OBSERVED THAT HE
WOULD CERTAINLY RETURN TO TBILISI SHOULD A PROFESSIONALLY
PROMISING OPPORTUNITY PRESENT ITSELF.

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3. ZAN VANT FOUND HIS INSTITUTE - WHICH CONSISTED OF ABOUT 40
PEOPLE - UNEXPECTEDLY NONPROFESSIONAL. THE GEORGIAN SCIENTISTS
WERE, IN HIS OPINION, 25 YEARS BEHIND IN THEIR WORK; HE FOUND
THAT THEY WERE IGNORANT OF MOST METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF MODERN
PALEOBIOLOGICAL RESEARCH. HE ASCRIBED THIS SHORTCOMING
TO THE INSTITUTE'S LACK OF ACCESS TO WESTERN PROFESSIONAL PUBLI-

CATIONS, TO OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT (THE MOST MODERN WAS OF EAST GERMAN MANUFACTURE BUT OUTDATED), AND TO A MINIMUM OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST AMONG ITS STAFF. THE LATTER, HE THOUGH, APPEARS TO BE RELATED TO WHAT IS AT BEST AN UNDISCIPLINED AND AT WORST A CORRUPT WORK AND EVEN LIFE STYLE. MANY MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE, VAN ZANT REPORTED, HOLD SECOND JOBS OF A NON-SCIENTIFIC CHARACTER, TO WHICH THEY DEVOTE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THEIR WORKING HOURS AND ENERGY WHILE RECEIVING FULL PAY FOR THE SUPPOSED EMPLOYMENT AT THE INSTITUTE

DESPITE THE IRREGULAR APPEARANCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF MANY OF THE STAFF, NO PROBLEMS APPEAR TO ARISE FOR THEM OR FOR THE INSTITUTE. ABSENT WORKERS ARE DULY REGISTERED FOR A NORMAL WORKING WEEK AND PAID ACCORDINGLY BUT LITTLE SERIOUS WORK IS ACCOMPLISHED. ONLY 3-4 PEOPLE, VAN ZANT ADDED, WERE DOING SERIOUS, SUSTAINED WORK. HIS COLLEAGUES, HE ALSO NOTED, STATED THAT MOST OF THE GEORGIAN ACADEMY'S THIRTY-PLUS INSTITUTES OPERATED ON A SIMILAR BASIS. THE INSTITUTES OF MATHEMATICS AND PHYSICS WERE, HOWEVER, NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS. THEY RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND HENCE REPORTEDLY CARRY ON LARGE AND SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH PROGRAMS. THEY BOTH BOAST LARGE, WELL-TRAINED, AND PROFESSIONAL STAFFS AS WELL AS WELL-EQUIPPED AND NEW FACILITIES.

4. THE GEORGIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND THE INTERACADEMY AGREEMENT. VAN ZANT WAS STRUCK BY THE GENERAL LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE INTERACADEMY AGREEMENT AMONG THE STAFF OF HIS INSTITUTE. HIS COLLEAGUES THERE CLAIMED NOT TO KNOW OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN ACADEMIES AND ASSURED HIM THAT SOVIET PARTICIPATION, IN ANY CASE, WOULD BE LIMITED TO QUOTE MOSCOW UNQUOTE SPECIALISTS. AS A COROLLARY, VAN ZANT'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOSTS THOUGHT THAT HE HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO WORK AT THEIR INSTITUTE AS A RESULT OF HIS OWN PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND INFLUENCE RATHER THAN AS THE CONSEQUENCE OF A GENERAL SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE AGREEMENT. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. TOON

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition History: n/a
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